Deceivers and... Their Dupes.

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Rev. R. C. REED, D. D.

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DECEIVERS AND THEIR DUPES.

THIS age which we claim as ours is not characterized by an excess of modesty. It is perfectly willing to admit its merits, and readily yields to the conviction that it will suffer nothing in comparison with any age that has preceded it. "Earlier ages," suggests Mr. Froude, "however energetic in action, were retrospective in their sentiments. The contrast between a degenerate present and a glorious past was the theme alike of poets, moralists and statesmen. We now know better, or imagine we know better, what the past really was. We draw comparisons, but rather to encourage hope than to indulge despondency. In every department of life—in its business and its pleasures, in its beliefs and in its theories, in its material developments, and in its spiritual convictions—we thank God that we are not like our fathers. And while we admit their merits, making al-

lowances for their disadvantages, we do not blind ourselves in mistaken modesty to our immeasurable superiority." These reflections of Mr. Froude would seem to be just. The marvellous development of industrial art has changed almost immeasurably the conditions of life, and has thrown a witching spell over our civilization. The rush and roar, the glare and glitter, the bounding pulsation of all life under these changed conditions very naturally lead us to think how dull and stupid and non-progressive the days of our fathers, and then the transition is easy to the fathers themselves. The Pullman car differs vastly from the stage coach. It is almost inevitable that we should assume that there is a corresponding difference between the occupants of the two. Those who rode in lumbering stage coaches and went to bed by the light of a tallow dip, of necessity must have been old fogies. We certainly know more than they, and knowing more, we believe less. This, then, can not be a credulous age. The things which in other ages were not made known to the sons of men have been revealed to us. Says William Dean Howells, "We no longer believe in supernatural things, in ghosts and haunted houses, and the like. All that is

dying out." He no doubt means by "we" all who are worth counting, "we, the people of this enlightened nineteenth century." It is now two hundred and six years since the twenty witches were hanged in Salem, Mass., since Cotton Mather, minister of Boston, in high repute for wisdom, wrote a treatise in which he expressed his "great thankfulness that so many witches had met their just doom" since the same treatise received the approbation of the President of Harvard College. It is one hundred and eighty-two years since Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, aged nine years, were hanged at Huntingdon, England, "for selling their souls to the devil; tormenting and destroying their neighbors by making them vomit pins; raising a storm so that a ship was almost lost at sea, by pulling off her stockings and making a lather soap." The age of credulity lies behind us. It is not to be supposed that our Secretary of the Navy carries a rabbit-foot to ward off accident and disease, after the manner of the illustrious Samuel Pepys, "secretary to the admiralty in the reigns of Charles II. and James II." Hear that worthy as he moralizes at the end of the year 1664: "I bless God I never have been in so good

plight as to my health in so very cold weather as this is, nor indeed in any hot weather, these ten years as I am at this day and have been these four or five months. But I am at a great loss to know whether it be my hare's foot, or taking every morning of a pill of turpentine, or my having left off the wearing of a gown." It is more to the point to mention that Charles II., the sovereign of that same illustrious Samuel Pepys, touched nearly a hundred thousand persons in twelve years to cure them of scrofula. We have retained the name "King's Evil," but it serves merely as a landmark to show how far we have travelled from the times of that ignorance. In 1806 the State of New York, according to the statement of an eminent medical author, purchased for one thousand dollars a preventive of hydrophobia. "The ingredients in this medicine were an ounce of the jawbone of a dog burned and pulverized, the false tongue of a newly-foaled colt dried and pulverized, and one scruple of verdigris, raised from the surface of old copper by lying in moist earth—the coppers of George I. or II. being preferred as the most pure." According to Boswell, Dr. Johnson did not believe in the Cock Lane ghost, but he was

sufficiently credulous on the subject of ghosts in general to sit up a good part of the night watching for the aforesaid notorious Cock Lane ghost. Nor was he alone in his vigil—"many gentlemen eminent for their rank and character" kept him company.

Surely we have outgrown such silly beliefs. It would seem the very acme of hardihood to attempt to prove that credulity is a characteristic of this age. It has thrown the light of knowledge into the deep abysses of mystery and shown that they are empty. Whatever does not prove its existence in some palpable manner is not to be made an object of belief. If our intellectual leaders cannot avoid credulity any other way, they take refuge in agnosticism. When they reach the bounds of positive knowledge, they say they have reached the limit of mental activity. They admit the realm of the unknowable, but they teach us that the only rational attitude of mind in respect to it is one of perfect vacuity. The spirit of our leaders is iconoclastic. Reverence for the past has ceased to be a virtue, and is rebuked as bondage to tradition. They are proposing to lead the race into larger liberty, and free them ultimately from all inherited faiths.

The question we raise is, have they as yet led this generation into the larger liberty—are they meeting with any phenomenal measure of success in their efforts to lead them to this goal? It is not our purpose to dogmatize. We claim no such familiarity with the mental history of the race as would justify us in dogmatism. But there are certain aspects of our age that the self-constituted representatives of the highest culture may overlook. It is possible that our leaders are not altogether acquainted with the number and character of their followers. Our missionaries among the heathen are sometimes surprised to find that a disciple who has been under instruction for years is still clinging to the fragments of his old superstition. It may be that this age which enjoys so much light from such exalted sources is still carrying along with it into the dawning of a new century superstition as gross, credulity as silly as any that disfigures the age behind us. Let us note a few facts.

1. About the year 1830, in Seneca county, New York, a poor, illiterate, visionary young man professed to find a book containing a new revelation from heaven. The story he told was that an angel had appeared to him

and made the astonishing disclosure that the American Indians were a remnant of the lost tribes of Israel, and that by command of God they had deposited a volume, embracing their national history, and "the fulness of the Gospel of Christ as it was given to his people on this land," on a hillside near the town of Palmyra. The young man went to the place designated, and removing the surface of the ground, found a stone box in which was the book written on gold plates in "Reformed Egyptian" characters. The reason why it was not written in Hebrew, according to the testimony of the angel, was the want of space. The young man was enabled to translate these gold plates by means of a huge pair of spectacles, the ancient Urim and Thummin, which he found in the same stone box. Thus was produced the Book of Mormon. Surely no age of the world has given birth to a grosser fraud. But no sooner did Joseph Smith, Jr., begin to preach than he began to make disciples. In a few weeks he organized a church of thirty members; in two years he had gathered disciples to the number of two thousand, and in twenty years his following had increased to two hundred thousand. Such was its spread, notwithstanding the most dil-

igent and varied efforts to stop it. There is little doubt that the Book of Mormon was a manuscript written to beguile the hours of a chronic invalidism by Rev. Solomon Spaulding, a Presbyterian preacher. The manuscript was stealthily copied by Sidney Rigdon. Many persons in the regions where the imposture was launched were familiar with the manuscript, and when the first Mormon propagandists began to preach, these persons recognized and proclaimed the fraud. Spaulding had died in the meantime, but his widow was appealed to, and she produced the original manuscript. But the strange delusion had taken hold. Smith and Rigdon, with brazen face and scurrilous tongues, denied everything, and kept in line the dupes they had gained. Then violence was tried. A mob broke into the homes of Smith and Rigdon, dragged them from their beds, tore their clothing from them, lacerated their bodies, tarred and feathered them, and left them almost dead. They were driven from State to State. As their numbers and strength increased, the strength of the opposition increased, until by and by it amounted to war. Finally Joseph Smith and his brother were treacherously assassinated. But the cause

had grown strong enough to live on and flourish without them. Apostates did all they could to destroy public confidence in the character of the leaders. Among these apostates was Sidney Rigdon, who had ranked next to Joseph Smith, and had been equally influential in the beginning of the movement. He drew up a paper in which he declared that many of the chief men, calling them by name, had "united with a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars and black-legs of the deepest dye, to cheat, deceive and defraud." But nothing could check the ever-increasing tide of success. Missionaries, filled with an enthusiasm that no opposition could foil, no hardships retard, went forth into all lands. They carried neither purse nor scrip, but with the sublime audacity of a faith that never wavered, threw themselves helplessly on a generous and guileless world. Results justified their course. At the Mormon conferences held throughout the British Isles in June, 1850, the number of Mormons in England and Scotland was reported at 27,863. In fourteen years preceding 1851 more than 50,000 were baptized in England, of whom nearly 17,000 had emigrated from her shores to Zion. To-day they number 300,000, con-

trol the State of Utah, form a considerable percentage of the population of Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona and Nevada, while they have large colonies in Old Mexico. Missions are maintained in Europe, Asia, Australia and the Islands of the Pacific. It is not working in the dark, not confining its efforts to the ignorant, not stealthily winning its way by concealing its grosser features. It is growing in the full light of our civilization, thrusting itself into positions of prominence, claiming recognition in our halls of national legislation, and staking its future, with bold confidence and with good reason, on the limitless credulity of nineteenth century humanity.

2. In 1847 in a little village in Wayne county, New York, two sprightly little girls, aged seven and five, discovered that they could make a peculiar sound by a slight, and even imperceptible, movement of the big toe. The sound was like that of a short, sharp rap on the floor. They deceived and bewildered their simple-minded mother. She became frightened, thought the house was haunted, and began to question the rappings on the supposition that they were made by invisible spirits. The children were spry enough to keep up and enhance the deception. The

mother called in her neighbors, and by persistent questioning extorted a tale of murder. The guilty parties were vaguely hinted at. The news spread rapidly and produced great excitement. An elder married sister of the little girls, Mrs. Fish, got possession of their secret. She drilled the young spiritualists, and had them to teach her how to crack her toe joints. Under her skillful manipulations the excitement continued to grow. In the course of two years sufficient interest had been worked up to justify a public exhibition. She carried the girls to Rochester, hired the largest hall in the city, and there and then entered on a career of imposture that scarcely has a parallel. Soon spiritual seances became the "fad." All classes of society were drawn to witness the inexplicable manifestations. Men whose names were world-famous, Horace Greely, Bancroft, Fennimore Cooper, Bryant, N. P. Willis, Theodore Parker, William M. Thackeray, James Freeman Clarke, Thos. M. Foote and Bayard Taylor, strong-minded women, such as Alice Cary and Harriet Beecher Stowe, lent their presence and showed the deepest interest. Physicians were selected to investigate and report. Among these Austin Flint, the most distinguished

medical authority in the metropolis, with two others, visited the mediums at their hotel by appointment, and closely scrutinized their persons while the rappings were heard. They came near solving the mystery, and in their report assured the public that it was capable of a natural explanation. But by this time multitudes had become converts to spiritualism. The infatuation spread, mediums multiplied, and to-day the spiritualists count a million and a half in the United States and Canada. This colossal structure is built on a fraud so simple that it was at first practiced merely in the spirit of mischief by two playful little girls, Maggie and Katie Fox. As they grew toward womanhood, they were very beautiful, and also attractive in manners. Two eminent men took a deep personal interest in them. Horace Greely educated Katie, and Elisha Kent Kane, the famous arctic explorer, married Margaret. These men were not duped by them and tried to reclaim them from their false lives. Their efforts seemed in vain, but after the death of their benefactors the women did repent. In the most public and earnest manner they tried to undo the mischief they had wrought. On the 21st of October, 1888, Mrs. Margaret

Fox Kane appeared at the Academy of Music in New York City, and in the presence of a large audience made a humiliating confession, and a complete expose. She said, "That I have been chiefly instrumental in perpetuating the fraud of spiritualism upon a too confiding public, most of you know. The greatest sorrow of my life has been that this is true, and though it has come late in my day, I am now prepared to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth—so help me God. I am here to-night as one of the founders of spiritualism, to denounce it as an absolute falsehood from beginning to end, as the flimsiest of superstitions, the most wicked blasphemy known to the world." She then proceeded to demonstrate the method by which the whole tissue of lies had been woven and palmed off on the public. The *New York World* on the following morning concluded a detailed account of the occasion with the following reflection: "Only the most hopelessly prejudiced and bigoted fanatics of spiritualism could withstand the irresistibe force of this commonplace explanation and exhibition of how 'spirit-rappings' are produced. The demonstration was perfect and complete, and if 'spirit-rappings' find

any credence in this community hereafter, it would seem a wise precaution on the part of the authorities to begin the enlargement of the State's insane asylums without delay." That was ten years ago, and the flourishing condition of spiritualism in that same community, as well as in the country at large, is a striking illustration of how little power the clearest and most palpable truth has over minds that have consented to believe a lie.

Be it noted in the case of Spiritualism, as in that of Mormonism, it is not depending for growth on stealthy methods; it is not shunning contact with enlightenment. It boldly challenges the attention of all classes, and counts on flourishing in the future, as it has flourished in the past, by successfully practicing on the limitless credulity of nineteenth century humanity.

3. In 1875 Helena P. Blavatsky, "a messenger of the adepts," appeared in New York and started the theosophic movement. She had a brilliant fancy and had steeped her mind in the dreamy mysticism of Buddhistic philosophy. She gave forth with dazzling effect her bewildering speculations, colored with the weird tints of the far distant Orient. She made her appeal to minds of the highest

and broadest culture, and claimed to be the apostle of all that was truest and best in all religions, and to offer for her teachings a philosophic and scientific basis that would satisfy souls that had outgrown all other systems of belief. She met a ready response and very soon formed a Theosophic Society, including men of some literary pretentions. She returned to India, and being a spiritualistic medium, made herself famous. She received communications in a mysterious way from the mountains of Thibet, where it is supposed the development of occultism through long centuries has reached its highest and purest stage. Her fame grew. The learned world of Europe concerned itself about her, and sent out agents to make a close study of her manifestations. Suspicious disclosures were made by enemies who had been in Madame Blavatsky's confidence. Investigation proved that she was the author of the letters which had been received from Thibet. Later on, in a fit of despondency, she confessed to one of her disciples, and petulantly exclaimed: "What is one to do when, in order to rule men, it is necessary to deceive them; when they will not accept even the doctrine of Isis Unveiled without the sanction of

miracle; when their very stupidity invites trickery, for almost invariably the more simple, the more silly, and the more gross the phenomenon, the more likely it is to succeed." This is valuable testimony from an expert in the art of deception. Such a confession one might have thought would have proven a death-blow to Theosophy, but not so. It has become firmly planted, and finds fertile soil in those who affect to be worshippers of Intellect. "It claims to be not a matter of faith, but of science—occult science, to be sure, but the most certain of all science. To accept the nonsense of the Mahatmas is not faith; it is belief on evidence. By one of those startling contradictions of the human mind so often seen, this system, which has nothing but assumption and boundless assertion to rest upon, which starts off into space, marshals the spheres, takes possession of eternity as the arena of its operations—this system finds many followers among those who have been emptied of all faith, and into whom a seven-fold credulity has entered and taken full possession." It has had but twenty-three years in which to grow. To what dimensions has it come? "Starting with a membership of fifteen persons in 1875, it has

spread all over the globe, until now it has hundreds of branches scattered through all the civilized and even the semi-civilized countries, and counts its members by thousands. Beyond its organization in importance, however, is the wonderful influence of theosophic teachings in coloring the literature, thought, ethics, and even scientific progress and religious expression of the world. The size of the society gives but a very imperfect idea of the extent of its work." Thus wrote William Q. Judge, who was president of the Theosophical Society in America from its founding in 1875 till his death in 1896. A statement prepared since that time tells us that the American Society has 175 branches, located in most of the principal cities, and in many smaller towns. There are several great divisions of the Theosophical Society throughout the world, in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. If it be asked, "On what meat doth this our Cæsar feed that he has grown so great?" the answer is found in the catalogue of the Theosophic Publishing Society in Duke street, London. A sample of its publications are as follows, viz.: "Astrology, Animal Magnetism, Astral Light, Alchemy, Mind-reading, Mind-cure, Myths of the Mid-

dle Ages, Phallicism, Chaldean Magic, Demonology, Witchcraft, Dream Mysteries, the Elixir of Life, Geomancy, Ghost Stories, Hypnotism, Sorcery, Mesmerism, Yoga Philosophy, Rosicrucianism, Faith Healing, the Cabala, Monism, Hindu Pantheism, the Science of Breath, White and Black Magic, Posthumous Humanity, Swedenborg the Buddhist, Reincarnation, Gipsy Fortune-telling, Secret Doctrine, Sacred Mysteries of the Mayas, The World as Will, by Schopenhauer, Somnambulism, Zodiacal Physiognomy, Hallucination, Mysticism." What a gallimaufry is this! Enough to give one a nightmare to read it over in the solemn silence of the night. Of all the uncanny things that the frightened fancy of man has conjured up only one has been omitted, and that is Hoodooism. An African Hoodoo doctor would doubtless take high rank among the theosophists.

4. In Lynn, Mass., in 1866, there lived a woman by the name of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. "When apparently near death," to use her own language, "her convictions laid hold upon the sublime verity that all evil, whether moral or physical, must be non-existent, because contrary to the omnipotent Good, God."

Having thus discovered that there was no such thing as sickness, it followed as a matter of course that she was not sick. She named this beneficent and timely discovery Christian Science, and began at once to make it known to others. She teaches that there is no sensation in matter, and that it is impossible, therefore, for one to hurt himself by cutting his flesh, or breaking his bones. He may think he is hurt, but he is self-deceived. To make the impossibility the more apparent, she teaches that there is no such thing as matter. In a statement which she prepared in 1895 for Johnson's cyclopedia she says, "the irresistible, logical, cardinal point in Christian Science—there is no matter. All is Mind." Obviously, if one has no flesh to cut, nor bones to break, he can suffer no real pain from cuts and fractures. To put this very important matter still further beyond all question, she proceeds to teach that there is only one Mind-God. It now becomes doubly obvious that we are in no danger of bodily injury. There is no matter, and hence we have no bodies. There is only one Mind, and hence we have no minds. Relieved of both mind and body, we can "smile at Satan's rage and face a frowning world." That is to say,

we could so smile and face, if there were any Satan and any world.

Mrs. Eddy puts forth the most astounding propositions with a sublime and impassive serenity as if she were merely stating self-evident truths. It is hard to take her seriously, and yet she maintains a serious air. She gives no intimation that she is perpetrating a joke, even when she is writing down a collocation of words that would do credit to a full-blown idiot. Take the following as a sample: "Matter is the subjective state of error, deflecting from the everlasting uprightness, and eventuating in false personal beliefs in sin, disease and death." She occasionally makes a statement that seems to contain an idea; but lest she should be suspected of having done it intentionally, she hastens on, without delay, into a strain of incoherent profundities.

Mrs. Eddy is an interesting study to those who take an interest in the freaks of human nature. Her book, *Science and Health*, is apparently written with an earnest and sincere purpose; the style is marked by sustained dignity, and no small measure of literary grace. To reconcile such writing with the utterly bewildering jumble of incogitabilities

which make up the matter of the book is the problem. Is Mrs. Eddy rhetorically sane, and logically insane? Does she retain the word-making power after having lost the thought-producing power? Further questions arise as to the moral quality of Mrs. Eddy's performances. Is she sane? and does she believe in herself? Touching this aspect of the case, the editor of the *Beacon*, a newspaper published at Dorchester, Mass., professes to throw some light on the subject. He recently took it upon himself to investigate "the life, reputation and character of the discoverer and founder of Christian Science." He claims to have begun the investigation, believing her to be a woman of good character, and rather exceptional hypnotic power. He states the conclusions at which he arrived: "We close our investigation, which has been very thorough and judicial in character, not with doubt of the accuracy of our former views, but with confidence that we entirely misjudged the woman known as Mary Baker G. Eddy, and that she, while definitely claiming to be the equal in nature and power of Jesus Christ, is in almost everything his precise opposite, is insincere, dishonest, full of deceit and falsehood, un-

clean of heart, impure of life, venomous to the last degree, despotic and arbitrary almost beyond belief—an exceptionally clever charlatan, who has built an immense fortune upon the credulity of hosts of innocent dupes." The *Beacon* further charges, and says the charges are capable of legal proof, that she received the ideas upon which her so-called Christian Science is based from a man named Quimby, to whom she has time and again credited them over her own signature; and that her book, *Science and Health,* "is a perfect mosaic of the thoughts of others, having been written largely with scissors, and been thoroughly revised, punctuated, rendered grammatical and consistent with itself (as much so, at least, as her stubborn ignorance would permit) by literary skill purchased and paid for, pages of it being written by other hands and published unaltered." The *Beacon* is not the only one who makes this charge in reference to Mrs. Eddy's book. An eminent critic has recently exhibited some specimens of composition that were unmistakably from Mrs. Eddy's pen which proved that she was not able to frame correct sentences, to say nothing of appreciating qualities of style. This helps to solve the problem above noted.

She hires the literary skill and furnishes the incongruous mixture that is to be clothed by it.

Any one at all skeptical in regard to the credulity of our age would have supposed that Mrs. Eddy was venturing on a hopeless task. Sane or insane, sincere or hypocritical, moral or immoral, can she get people to accept affirmations which are in the very face of the convictions of the race that have come down from Adam, and which contradict all our five senses? We would think that people must believe in matter if they believe in anything. They must know that it hurts to cut, or burn, or bruise the flesh. Can Mrs. Eddy merely by grandiloquent language that nobody can understand beguile persons into thinking that "all evil, whether moral or physical, must be non-existent"? Statistics furnished by Mrs. Lathrop give us this answer: The first church of Christian Scientists was organized in Boston, Mass., June, 1879, with 26 members, with Mrs. Eddy herself as pastor. In twenty years the one church has grown to 415, the 26 members to 70,000, and the whole number of adherents to over 200,000. Flourishing churches have been organized in London, Paris, Dresden, Berlin and

Hanover, also in Canada, Brazil and Scotland. Many handsome church edifices have been built in different cities, and many others are in process of erection. There is no evidence that Mrs. Eddy's influence is waning. In 1894 her disciples built a church in Boston especially as a testimonial of the regard in which she is held. It cost, including the site, nearly $250,000. Her book, *Science and Health*, has passed through 185 editions. Carlyle said of England, "Its population is forty millions—mostly fools." Mrs. Eddy is helping to demonstrate that England has no monopoly of such characters.

5. A poor woman, who had need of money, borrowed a small sum from a Jewish usurer, giving him in pledge all she had best in clothes and linen. The feast of Easter approaching, she entreated him to lend her, at least for that great day, what she had pawned him. "I am willing to do so," said he, "and I will even release you from the whole sum I lent you, if you promise to bring me the Host you will receive in communion." The desire of having her clothes again, and not being obliged to repay the sum borrowed, proved a temptation the unhappy woman could not resist. She promised to bring him the Host,

and kept her promise. On the morrow she went to her parish church, and after receiving the Host into her mouth, she hastened to take it out again, wrapped it in a handkerchief and brought it to the wretched Jew to whom she had promised it. It was for the purpose of gratifying his hatred against our Lord that this man wanted to have a Host; he treated it with the greatest indignity, and Jesus Christ constantly showed him how sensible he was to the outrages offered him. The Jew first put the Host on the table, and struck it repeatedly with a penknife; blood immediately flowed from it in abundance, which caused the man's wife and children to shudder with horror. He nailed it to a wall and brutally struck it; then he pierced it with a lance to renew, if possible, the frightful torments of our Lord's Passion. The Host shed blood anew, as though to prove to the execrable wretch that it was not merely material bread. He threw it into the fire, and it was seen flying here and there without receiving any injury. The infernal rage that animated the Jew led him to throw it into a pot of boiling water; the water took the color of blood, and the Host then appeared visibly under the form of Christ crucified. This

sight so terrified the deicide that he went to hide himself in a dark corner of the house. But it was not long before his crime was discovered, and the discovery came about this wise: One of the children, seeing the people going to church, cried out simply, "Do not go to church any more to seek your God; don't you know my father killed him?" A woman hearing what the child said, entered the house under the pretext of asking for some fire, and she saw the Host, which was still under the form of Jesus on the cross; but it soon resumed its former shape, and came to repose in the little vessel which the woman had in her hand. All amazed, she carried her treasure religiously to the Church of St. Jean-en-Greve.

"Seeing is believing," says the old adage. If, therefore, any one is incredulous, let him go to Paris and visit the Church of St. Jean-en-Greve, where the miraculous Host is preserved. The history just related "is most authentic," says the writer from whose book it is taken. The book was written about twenty-five years ago, and has gone through successive editions, the copy quoted from having been published in 1888. It is properly summoned, therefore, to bear witness to the

kind of literature demanded by our age. The author is one of the most prolific and popular writers in the Roman Catholic Church. The extract quoted is only a sample of the good things with which the book is filled. It was submitted to the censorship of an approved theologian, and on his report it received the *imprimatur* of the most reverend, the Archbishop of New York. The "eminent clergyman" who discharged the delicate and responsible duty of censor speaks of the book and its author in almost hysterical adulation. "I have found the matter solid, well digested and instructive, the style simple, earnest and full of unction. The volume has nothing of the cold and dry system that makes religion among us so often a thing of duty more than of love. Deep thoughts in plain words, doctrinal sublimities in language so simple that a child, without effort, may understand. In it we find, together with all the motives that tend to draw our souls toward Jesus, our perpetual victim at mass, a glowing record of miracles, revelations and wondrous graces obtained through faith in, and love of our dear Lord in his own divine sacrifice. It is refreshing indeed to find in our cold, utilitarian age and country a work issued from the

press so full of Catholic life, and so glowing with the fire of Catholic love. To all men and women, to young and old, I would say: Spare yourself some unnecessary article of dress and buy this book. Every single page of it is worth the price of the volume. I wish it were in my power to place a copy of your work in the hands of every Catholic who can read the English language; and I hope it will be translated into all modern tongues, and come to the knowledge of every human soul on earth. May the angels carry it to the hands, minds and hearts of all." This extended quotation, which is but a small part of the eminent censor's commendation, is for the purpose of putting it beyond question that Michael Muller's book on the *Holy Sacrifices of the Mass,* miracles and all, is the kind of devotional literature most eagerly devoured by the Catholics, not of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but of the nineteenth, not of benighted Mexico and South America, but of the United States and Canada. Archbishop Hughes, of New York, wrote his commendation in the following language: "*Dear Father Muller,*—I take great pleasure in adding my commendation to the many others which have already been given

of your excellent book on the Holy Mass. I sincerely hope that it will have the widely extended circulation which it so well deserves." The Catholic press of the country were prompt and fervent in giving the book the benefit of their endorsement.

Shall we doubt the sincerity of the endorsement given to such stories by the high dignitaries and the learned ecclesiastics of the Romish church? Shall we suppose that their object is merely to palm off these pious legends on the ignorant with the hope of stimulating their faith and devotion? The answer is that these stories are no greater tax on credulity than the dogma of the Mass itself. When one has developed his capacity for believing until he can receive as true the doctrine that "Jesus Christ, soul, body and divinity, is not only whole and entire in each consecrated wafer, but whole and entire in each particle of the wafer, so that millions of Christs are daily offered on Catholic altars," he can certainly have no trouble with anything else. Furthermore, these stories of "Father" Muller's, so full of Catholic life, and so glowing with the fire of Catholic love, are exactly in keeping with other means used for the nourishment of Catholic piety. It

is only seven years since a threadbare and faded fragment of cloth was exhibited by authority of the Pope at the city of Treves, in Germany, and more than a million devout pilgrims went to look on it, taught by the Catholic Church that they saw in it a part of the seamless garment worn by Christ, and for which the soldiers gambled under the cross. It is not so long since a bone was placed on exhibition in one of the churches in New York City, and multitudes, almost without number, flocked to see it, believing it to be, as the Catholic authorities had taught them, a bone from the arm of the Virgin Mary's mother.

We have arranged these facts illustrative of the credulity of our age in climatic order. The crude fabrication of the illiterate founder of Mormonism demanded for its success a fair measure of credulity; the childish tricks of the Fox sisters, the founders of spiritualism, demanded a larger measure; the fantastic and incoherent vaporings of Madame Blavatsky demanded a yet larger measure; the pretentious absurdities of Mrs. Eddy even a larger measure still; but it was reserved for Rome to demonstrate the very utmost measure to which human credulity can go. Mormonism, spiritualism, theosophy and Christian Science are all young in the cause, novices in the art of deception. They do well considering, but to Rome belongs the steady progress of ages. Her incommensurable system of imposture has been built up by slow and gradual methods. Her mighty superstructure of falsehood has been reared by the patient work of successive generations. It has now reached dimensions beyond which the mendacious ingenuity of man can hardly carry it. There must be a limit to lying devices, if no limit to human credulity.

It had been our purpose to suggest some further illustrations of our topic from the various quackeries connected with the healing art, but enough has been adduced to make good our contention. At any rate, we shall rest the case here. Carlyle says that the latter half of last century was "the very age of impostors, cut-purses, swindlers, enthusiasts, ambiguous persons; quacks simple, quacks compound; crack-brained, or with deceit prepense; quacks and quackeries of all colors and kinds. As if Bedlam had broken loose; as if rather the everlasting pit had opened itself and from its still blacker bosom had issued madness and all manner of hope-

less misbirths to masquerade and chatter there." Carlyle introduces this statement to account for the brilliant success of the prince of impostors, Count Cagliostro. If the sage of Chelsea could see the far more extensive and permanent success of far more bungling cheats than Cagliostro, he would have to ransack his rugged vocabulary for still harsher words in which to characterize the latter half of this present century. From accounts given us of Count Cagliostro it is not a serious reflection on an age that he stirred a temporary and superficial excitement. Says an elegant writer, "There was not a fine lady in Paris who would not sup with the shade of Lucretius in the apartments of Cagliostro. There was not a military officer who would not discuss the art with Alexander, Hannibal or Cæsar; or an advocate or counsellor who would not argue legal points with the ghost of Cicero. These were spiritual manifestations," adds our author, "worth paying for, and all our degenerate mediums would have to hide their diminished heads in the presence of Cagliostro."

Can we assent to Mr. Howell's *dictum?* "We no longer believe in supernatural things, in ghosts and haunted houses, and the like.

All that is dying out." Is it not probable that he and his like would be surprised to know how small the coterie included in his somewhat pompous "we?" They have discovered a little, thin current setting their way, and they think it is the gulf-stream, but it is not. The aphorism of Burke is still true: "The credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves." It only remains to add that both dupes and knaves are as numerous now as they ever were in the past.